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SERIALS SELECTION

This paper will consider some relatively unorthodox, fairly bibliographically free aspects of magazine selection—an approach in the worst tradition of the essentially fact-for-fact oriented library literature. However, anyone seeking orthodox information about indexes, abstracts or access to bibliographical information on magazines is referred to Winchell's *Guide to Reference Books* where it is all put precisely and accurately. In a more discursive readable fashion, William Huff has achieved much the same thing in his exellent article "Periodicals" in the January 1967, issue of *Library Trends.* Also, in my book, *Magazines for Libraries,* one will find a relatively exhaustive general and subject bibliography to the field.

Discussing what he terms a psychograph of adolescent rebellion, Bruno Bettelheim states that today's youth are frustrated "because modern technology has made them *obsolete*—they have become socially irrelevant and, as persons, insignificant."[1] Much the same might be said of the present art of magazine selection. Technology, from the "until forbidden" order to reliance on indexes and computerized records apparently has made much of the process obsolete. Large libraries, at any rate, now no longer select as much as collect. In so doing, it seems to me, they have made the magazine socially irrelevant, at least to all but a small, highly selected segment of the community.

In the words of Bob Dylan, "The Times They are a Changing." Particularly in larger libraries there is a recognition that somehow, in some way, the library must re-establish contact with those living outside of mid-cult suburbia. Public libraries are moving back to the streets, and academic libraries are studying ways to serve the so-called disadvantaged student, usually an euphemism for the Black. A cursory glance at the literature and a visit to almost any local, regional or national meeting confirm the suspicion that the

old values, the values based on the best for a few, are giving way to a more relative, realistic idea of service and selection. It is not surprising that the National Advisory Committee on Libraries concluded its report with a statement that a library can be understood only as it enhances a socially valuable function.[2] In the spirit of this statement is the newly organized American Library Association Social Responsibilities Round Table which demands that ALA take a social, humanistic stand on issues other than cataloging rules.

Almost all of this paper is devoted to the humanistic side of librarianship, primarily because I subscribe to a position stated succinctly by Christopher Lasch and Eugene Genovese:

> The arts and humanities must be rescued from their present degraded, essentially ornamental postion and established on an equal footing with science, as studies that make their own contribution to the understanding of the objective world. Unless these things are done, the working class and the American people as a whole will have no defense against a technological anti-culture that perpetrates one atrocity after another against people of other nations while it ruins its own environment and increasingly reduces its citizens to insecurity and anxiety.[3]

I do not wish to suggest there is no place for technology in libraries, but on the other hand, I am not overly impressed with what has been done—as compared to what has been published—to date. I think the real danger, at least in terms of magazine selection, is that the librarian who becomes involved with the shortcuts of record keeping and ordering offered by automation is apt to forget what the machine is really doing in his garden. In addition to the commendable notion that technology can make the library more efficient, it has given many justifications for employing the magic term "science" in library science.

Technology is no help in finding material in magazine selection. There is little to find. Librarians apparently consider it of minor importance. A survey of the early 1960s found that in sixty-five representative larger libraries, only five have written statements of their magazine selection policies.[4] The sludge of book selection is fulsome. Magazines are mentioned in three recent publications,[5] but only as a footnote or minor consideration. Somehow the magazine rarely rates its own selection discussion. The reason is not difficult to ascertain.

In most libraries, big or small, public or college, the magazine may be a major housekeeping chore, a joy for solve-it-all-with-a-computer administrators or a trauma for the reader who seeks the one copy which is either "now at the bindery," stolen, or otherwise missing, but in terms of quantity (or often quality) they are of little significance. Admittedly in special and large libraries, magazines may constitute from 50 to 75 percent of the current reference sources, but for collections excluding Yale, Harvard and fifty to 100 university and public libraries, the holdings normally are limited to what is ordained permissible by such basic Wilson indexes as *Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature, Social Sciences and Humanities Index* and possibly *Applied Science and Technology Index.* Numerous surveys indicate that the normal college library will be fortunate to subscribe to 400 periodicals, and

better school and public libraries will average less than one-half that number. The budget for magazines in many libraries is even smaller than for janitorial services—a generalization which is not supported by empirical evidence, only by a cynic's suspicion.

The fascinating aspects of all this are that while no more than 10 to 20 percent of Americans read books, at least 80 to 90 percent read magazines. If the library is concerned with reading *per se*, more attention might be given to the attraction of *True Story* and the *Reader's Digest* as compared to the average book. Put another way, the average reader is more interested in fun than intellectual pursuits. Fritz Machlup found that almost 40 percent of the readers' dollars was used to purchase "pastime knowledge," while only some 20 percent was involved with "intellectual knowledge." The rest was divided between religion and works on practical knowledge.[6]

Regardless of the type and number of magazines a library has, it takes no survey to make one point—the collection is geared toward education and job-oriented aids rather than toward recreation and entertainment. If anything, in larger libraries the stress is on serials indexed in *Chemical Abstracts* or *Biological Abstracts*, to name only two of the close to 300 indexing and abstracting services directed to science and technology in the United States. In any discussion of magazines, sooner or later the discussion swings to and stays at a dead pragmatic center. I have yet to discover even an article which supports what Machlup and the American reader know; that is, magazines of entertainment and joy are of more importance to the majority than are titles of the learned societies, organizations and universities. The possible exception may be the really small library where emphasis is on such gems as *Good Housekeeping* and *McCall's*, but even here it is assumed that when it comes to recreational reading, the middle class *hausfrau* is the only one who counts.

Is seems irrelevant whether the librarian subscribes personally to the puritan, Calvinistic ethic that joy is sin or to the hippie, turned-on mystique that joy is love. The point is that in terms of magazine selection, the librarian, in his zeal to collect rather than to select, tends to be purer than Calvin, forgetful that somewhere out there an audience has been lost, or at least partially turned off by the magazines he has selected. Granted, there is no evidence to prove that magazines devoted to recreation and fun provide major and moving experiences for readers. Still, their absence may indirectly prevent would-be readers from becoming involved in any library experience at all.

Let me try to support my contention that libraries often overlook the obvious. A journey to the Newport Folk Festival in 1969, followed by thirty-six hours at the Woodstock festivities alerted me to something which many librarians probably are aware of; that is, when it comes to reading magazines, the turned-on college man has taken up comic books. If Tolkien was once the "in thing," now the student who can give the genealogy and history of Superboy or Batman is much more celebrated. More sophisticated members of the community go even a step further in following the activities of pornographic, socially irreverent characters in comic strips which appear in underground newspapers such as *Screw, Kiss* and *Pleasure.* Admittedly this is a trifle superfluous, tangential to education, but is it any more ridiculous than the scholar

who wants line and verse from an article in the *PMLA*? Both are extremes, yet while the library gladly serves the eccentricities of the elder, it assiduously avoids the more humorous, more human needs of the younger. I am not necessarily suggesting librarians put in a stock of comic books, but, then again, why not? And I do not mean for future social studies. If nothing else, the gesture, which would be inexpensive enough, might do something to humanize the library. Out of curiousity I asked a number of comic book fans if they had ever seen their favored fare in a college or university library. The consensus: "Come off it, dad, you must be kidding." Well, I am not kidding, and the tragedy is that some of the best minds of our younger generation must resort to comics as a mark of defiance against the establishment, sadly represented in this case as much by the library as by the oldsters.

At one time, particularly in the 1930s, effort was made to relate reader preferences to the library, but this rings oddly now. We have largely given up the attempt. Along with the rest of America, librarians have tended to ignore the presence of large groups of potential readers—groups which are excluded from libraries because they are superfluous. If the times are changing, it is primarily because the library along with other public institutions may break up unless the needs of the subordinate members of the society are considered.

Libraries have to give up the traditional emphasis on quality and adopt a more realistic selection policy based on relevance—relevance not only of the magazine *per se*, but relevance of the magazine to the community it serves. If one subscribes to the notion that good, better and best are only relative, if the library is for every man, why should it not be just as much for the housewife or for the working girl who enjoys *True Story* as much as for the better educated suburban matron who gets a similar treat from *McCall's* or *Ladies' Home Journal*? Admittedly, the support of entertainment as well as education as a goal for magazine selection is debatable. Also debatable is the controversial magazine, and while space does not permit a justification of a comic book in a library, perhaps an analysis of controversial magazines is applicable.

Let me begin with that old standby *Playboy*. While I do not consider it even mildly controversial in terms of content, it is a useful example on two counts. First, it has attracted more debate in libraries during the past decade than possibly any other mazagine except *Evergreen Review*. Second, it is illustrative of the misguided overemphasis on deleting a magazine because it causes a high reading on too many librarians' personal shock meters. One might just as well register the polemic *Realist* or the right wing *American Opinion* or the Communist-oriented *Worker*—all drive the shock meter up to the danger mark. However, sex always appears a trifle more interesting than politics, so consider *Playboy*.

While it is questionable (to paraphrase policy statements) that *Playboy* either contributes "to the reform of manners in general," or helps the individual "to grow intellectually and spiritually," its publisher claims it assists five million under-thirty readers to "enjoy life more fully." In the words of the Public Library Association in *Minimum Standards for Public Library Systems*, it provides "wholesome recreation and constructive use of leisure

time."[7] It also provides a look at what is up front which upsets and disturbs—in one way or another—a good many librarians. The librarian may rightfully question its moral and social values, but in the wake of its dedicated five million readers, this a pretty weak argument. Also, it is difficult to argue with the Harvard Business School which thinks publisher Hugh Hefner's experiences are a lesson for its pupils. The librarian solves it by a tendency to cop out. The favored argument runs that it may serve some needs, but there is not enough money in the budget for such magazines. The dollars are better spent on an indexed item such as *Reader's Digest* or the *Ladies' Home Journal.* Well, this may or may not be true, but the confusion between moral policy on the one hand and pragmatic considerations on the other satisfies no one. The *Playboy* reader stays away from the library, the librarian dutifully continues to study methods of learning about community needs, and the selection policy remains a moribund monument to bias.

While there is no accurate count of how many small, medium-sized or large libraries take *Playboy* (either issue by issue or on less exciting microfilm), a survey of school libraries is instructive. In any discussion of large libraries, elementary and high schools seem to be forgotten. Just why, I am not quite sure, but I suspect it is because they offer only elementary science courses and certainly do not boast Nobel Prize winners or potential grant grabbers on the faculty. Still, it seems to me they are relatively important, and a survey of a few years ago is instructive for all libraries.

Comparing the selection policies of school libraries with the demands of the students, James R. Squire observed: "There is no close correlation between magazines available in school libraries and those the students read frequently . . . more throughtful periodicals are seldom selected by students. *Mad Magazine,* in fact, accounted for forty more readers in the survey than either *Harper's* or *Atlantic Monthly*."[8] Squire also discovered that the fifteenth most popular magazine among students was *Playboy,* to which none of the libraries bother to subscribe. Incidentally, the number one choice of librarians was *Saturday Review,* followed by *Reader's Digest.* The students failed to mention *Saturday Review* and ranked the *Reader's Digest* a poor sixth after *Life*, and eleventh choice for libraries. A similar survey in 1937, revealed an overwhelming preference for *Esquire* among male students. But again, it then made none of the library lists.

Twenty years later through, *Esquire* was found in a small percentage of high schools, and the recent ALA *Periodicals for School Libraries* included it among its four hundred or so preferred titles—one would like to think this was due to its merit, although its indexing in *Reader's Guide* may just have had something to do with the choice. Needless to add, *Playboy* is not found between the entries, *Pigeon News* and *Plays.* Eldridge Cleaver has suggested the battleground of the future is not between races—it is the war between white kids and their parents. He might have added libraries to the enemy list.

I think it safe to assume *Playboy* is probably not popular among any libraries, regardless of their size. Some, to be sure, have at long last recognized the literary importance of the magazine—a nice run around the moral left end of section policy—and have included it in the collection. Others, such as

Cornell where an eminently sane librarian, David Kaser, is in control, now try to make up for past mistakes. According to newspaper reports Kaser is seeking a complete run to fill in lacking and incomplete volumes. He notes that "earlier issues are almost unobtainable on the scholarly book market (especially in complete state, with the centerfold that researchers are known to find of particular interest)."[9] It might be added that an early selection mistake can be costly, as anyone knows who glances at the asking prices for reprints of defunct little magazines once considered objectionable on moral grounds by many librarians. And, of course, no one, even the New York Public Library (NYPL), is exempt from a mistake in judgment.

According to one dealer with a complete run of *The Village Voice,* the NYPL does not have early issues of this most famous of all early underground newspapers.

Too much, of course, can be made of a maverick such as *Playboy.* Personally, I am inclined to go along with the feelings, if not the methods, of five Grinnell College students who last February "threw off their clothing during a campus speech Feb. 5 by a representative of *Playboy* magazine to protest what they called the magazine's 'sensationalism of sex.' "[10] Still, *Playboy* is indicative of a general attitude by librarians towards magazine selection, the obverse of which is the case of *Evergreen Review.* During the past two or three years, and most recently in the *ALA Bulletin,* [11] it has become the *cause célèbre,* the walking papers, for a number of librarians. If one wonders where the librarians were some thirteen years ago when it first cranked up as a little magazine, one can only surmise that it takes ten or more years for the average library to discover a new, controversial title. At any rate, a number of librarians from Daniel Gore to the Los Angeles Public Library staff consider it of enough importance to include it in the collection—what is more, they are willing to fight for it.

Gore lost his job because he entered a subscription to the *Evergreen Review* for a small church-owned, West Texas college. He documented his expereiences in the *ALA Bulletin,* but more important are the reactions to his article. Several librarians disagreed with his stand because of their ambivalence between money and philosophy. One correspondent noted: "In articles of this nature there is never any indication that the money might better have been spent on other material."[12] Still, the heart of the argument was summed up by the writers who noted: "As a responsible librarian, he would be wise to recognize that some of his community might hold to another view; and the worst possible way to convert them to his own view would be to put on a petulant display of the pride and arrogancy of professionalism."[12]

The key words here are "some of his community." The correspondent, as in most cases of this type, takes it for granted that he is representative of not some, but nearly all, of the community. In magazine selection policies this is reflected in the ALA Standards, where the key statement for public libraries is that the library is to serve "most people most of the time."[13] The line between "some" and "most" is not lost in Brooklyn, where it is resolved—as it should be—by the policy statement: "As a community institution, the public library is dedicated to the concept of service to everyone."[14] Slowly

coming around to the same notion of service, the Adult Services Division of ALA has drafted a new notion of "A Bill of Rights for Adults." Prefacing the yet-to-be-adopted policy statement, the Standards Development Committee says: "Society is complex and changing rapidly. To live and participate intelligently in today's world, every adult must have access to all available sources of information . . . . Each adult is an important, unique individual."[15] Now "each" and "every" replaces "some" and "most," and this, let me suggest, has a major implication.

Both by implication and logical extension, selection for all questions the moral underpinning of traditional selection. It opts for what some have called the new sensibility, situation ethics or the new morality.[16] Briefly, this is a view which refuses to accept the notion that generalizations can be made about what is aesthetically better or worse for all men. By admitting that magazines, for example, are no better or worse, only different, the librarian agrees that selection must be more a situational than a prescriptive matter. And if the library is truly going to serve "all" instead of "some," it has to take a long, hard, second look at some of its favored selection assumptions. I have mentioned that this may mean more of a consideration of what readers—particularly those who rarely or never enter a library—may want, rather than what they should want.

It also means that traditional criteria of evaluation must give way to more meaningful criteria, in this case to the twentieth century.

Present magazine selection criteria, if indeed they exist, are almost platitudes. In terms of so-called objective evaluation, the librarian fondly uses such phrases as: accuracy and objectivity of editorial content, format, publications of major learned societies, use in reference and research situations, local interest, points of view not represented in books, currency, supplementing the book collection—all are familiar, yet hollow words which summarize what every good librarian knows.

The problem, of course, is that the platitudes are too easily mouthed. A librarian may dismiss a distasteful point of view in a magazine by observing that its editor fails to be either accurate or objective. An otherwise mediocre, but well-read and much demanded magazine may be left off the subscription list because it is too much fun. As Berelson, Fiske, and countless other observers of the selection process have discovered, most librarians have mixed feelings towards selection.

It takes no perceptive genius to recognize that there is a subtle difference between confessions in *Modern Romances* and *Harper's Magazine,* that *Science Digest* falls somewhat short of the scholarly achievements of *Scientific American,* and that *True West* is not quite up to the *Journal of American History.* And even among the so-called quality magazines, it is not difficult to make a choice between one issued by the American Institute of Physics or any other scholarly organization and one issued by business-oriented publishers such as those who put out anything from *Popular Science* to *Popular Electronics.* The librarian is safe enough as long as he is speaking for the group supporting his choice.

Except for a few isolated surveys such as the one conducted by John Berry,[17] there is no evidence (other than personal impression and a few communications from students and teachers) that the degree of truly controversial magazines taken by the larger libraries, with the exception of the fifty largest libraries, is not severely limited. Public and academic libraries alike, fall far short at the extremes. Qualitatively they are their best in the noncontroversial, strictly educational items. The academic library may argue it does not serve everyman, but is this true? Will the present academic standards for collecting periodicals be enough when the words "open university" are no longer whispered but are a reality, and when everyman, regardless of his high school record, may at least have a chance to go to a university or college? Times are changing in colleges and universities, too. Look, for example, how well prepared most schools were for Black studies. Except for such obvious places as Howard University, Harvard, and Northwestern, how many schools of higher learning five or ten years ago equated everyman with more than the token Black? It would be interesting to know how many of the two hundred largest academic libraries had the annual *Index to Periodical Articles by and about Negroes* (Boston, G. K. Hall and Co.) or more or less substantial runs of the items it indexed. See how fast all are scrambling for back copies of everything from the respected *Journal of Negro History* to the pictorial, less than intellectually inclined, *Jet*.

And what demands are the young rebels going to make next on a library? To date they seem to flock to it to overturn catalog drawers, but the alternative, more dangerous threat is a voice in selection. And it will be a dissident voice. During the years of student unrest there has been a considerable amount of discussion as to what it all means. No one is quite sure, but something is terribly wrong. To many students it seems that education has become irrelevant, and it follows that the library has also become irrelevant.

It has been estimated that only about 10 percent of the campus population is trying to revolutionize the universities. An even smaller number are at work in high schools. Still, it takes no Toynbee to realize that it is the minority who often shape, indeed usually direct, our society. There was only one Chaucer, one Christ and four Beatles, but they literally revolutionized our literature, our moral attitudes and our life styles. When anyone begins a quantitative argument that the dissident press is unimportant, unimpressive and not representative, the danger inevitably grows that the critics will be victims of former President Lyndon Johnson's love of consensus. The ominous hint of just that happening is the phrase "generation gap"—a gap which, I believe, can be bridged in part by librarians abandoning the fallacious selection game that equates importance, if not always intrinsic quality, with research, education and morality.

Generally the dissident press is the voice of youth. It is the magazine or newspaper which not only fails to support the mid-cult view of the world, but attacks the view. It is the magazine to the left of suburbia's biases; it is the magazine via words and pictures which threatens the sexual tolerance of the split level bedroom; it is the magazine expounding political or religious views

ahead of, or sometimes, behind the times. In this latter category might be added the publications of the conservative student group, Young Americans for Freedom. Their philosophy, as sounded in such papers as *The Renaissance* at Duke and *The Arena* at Stanford, is best summed up by a statement made to the *New York Times* by Pat Korten, editor of the *Badger-Herald* at the University of Wisconsin: "If the radicals take over a building we can have 300 people, just like that–some of the fraternity people, the football team, the ROTC group, the engineers. It could get rough."[18]

The format of little magazines usually appears in total disregard of the aesthetic expectations of the reader of *Reader's Digest, Life* or *Good Housekeeping.* A secondhand mimeograph machine will do as well as a million dollar webb press. The message, not the medium, is the editor's concern. Advertising is a minimal, usually nonexistent consideration. Frequently it is more dependent on the whims of the editor than on demands of the Post Office for publication dates. Finally, the audience is select. Every well-known journal of opinion such as *New Republic, Nation* and the *National Review* is short on circulation–about 400,000 total, or approximately one-thirteenth of readership of *Good Housekeeping* or *Playboy.* And while the magazines obviously do not have much direct influence on the public, the editors are quick to point out that the influence is meaningful because readers constitute opinion decision makers. Conversely, Robert Sherrill observes wryly that the reason the United States maintains a *Reader's Digest* mentality is that it has the largest circulation of any magazine in this country–some seventeen million. Its closest competitor is *TV Guide.*

Another major form of the dissident magazine is the so-called underground newspaper. Some fifty or more newspapers, claiming a combined circulation of close to one million, are issued from coast to coast on a more or less regular weekly or monthly basis. As one editor puts it, "Underground is a sloppy word and a lot of us are sorry we got stuck with it." He is right. It really is not that underground. If one accepts most editors' notion that the press is united in a belief in activism, it is a growing, potential force. And this is not only a political, but a cultural force. Writers and editors have broadened the editorial content to include topical comments on music, literature, art, theatre, film communication, economics, poetry and religion.

The underground newspaper differs from the little magazine in that it is purposefully designed to reach a large audience. The editors, and some of them are experts at persuasion, are attempting to mobilize young people. With such cries as "the underground press is the loving product of the best minds of my generation, running screaming through the Negro streets at dawn looking for an angry printing press," the canny editors have caught up with Madison Avenue. Like the purveyors of television advertisements aimed at children, the editors recognize that young people will soon comprise over 50 percent of our population. They are trying to capture their imaginations and to meet their needs. And to a degree, they are succeeding where *Boys' Life* and *Seventeen* are failing. The reason for their success is that they have seen through the monolithic mass media and the clichés which elders attempt to pass off to younger people as truisms.

Let it be noted that the revolution is coming to the high schools as well. There are a number of high school-based underground newspapers and magazines. None are concerned with the jocks or the mixer. All are politically involved with rights for the young. As a reporter in the *New York Times* put it, these revolutionaries who have to be home by 7:30 are asking more and more "What in hell am I doing here?"[19] Some of the answers will be found in their papers, e.g., the *New York High School Free Press* (208 W. 85th St., Apt. 2E) or the *Institutional Green* (Sean Daniel, 865 West End Avenue, New York, N. Y. 10025), to name but two. The answers are not quite what young adult librarians talk about.

Aside from youth, and those who think young, the little magazines have another patron–the *National Endowment for the Arts.* Established in 1966, it has offered grants of $250 to $1,000 to editors for use in the development of their magazines. Furthermore, it has financed the *American Literary Anthology,* an annual collection of articles, papers and poems for little, and not too little, magazines. Parenthetically, although the discussion here is almost entirely devoted to underground, activist little magazines and newspapers, the standard littles for a generation or more have been such well known literary magazines as *The Hudson Review, The Kenyon Review, The Sewanee Review,* and the like. The younger generation disqualifies them as members of the establishment, or worse, as members of the Decaying Liberal Movement. Age and success can often mean ostracism from the hard core little magazine circle.

Librarians and adults tend to treat the littles as abnormal temporary aberrations. Yet, many of their faithful readers think that these magazines are normal, that the *Reader's Guide* garden variety are incompatible with what they know America to be and what they consider the future to be. The March, 1969 *Wilson Library Bulletin* devotes itself to three articles on the underground press. A critic agreed with me that these papers are "really just reflections of a new type of younger generation." The uneasiness of America's youth is certainly there, along with articles proposing the legalization of drugs, criticisms of the political establishment, and a considerable amount of put-on regarding sexual mores. They are truly human, often sophomoric, even a trifle boring, but always a different voice than found in the mass media. I would suggest it is an important voice; one a librarian cannot and should not ignore.

But they do. For example, how many public (or for that matter university) libraries subscribe to even the basic underground newspapers–*East Village Other,* the *Berkeley Barb,* and the *Los Angeles Free Press?* How many have a file of such little poetry magazines as *Kayak, The Sixties,* or *Caterpillar?* How many take a few basic general little magazines such as *The Smith, Ambit,* or *December?*

In all fairness, though, a few have tried, and the results have been disasterous. Librarians cannot seem to win for losing. Just this year, John Forsman, head librarian of the Richmond Public Library in California, announced his resignation. Why? He had been under attack for his inclusion in the library of such publications as the *Berkeley Barb*. The story has been and will continue to be repeated wherever another minority (and I think it is a

minority) gains control, i.e., the militant right wing. As I indicated earlier, I think what is operating in most libraries is not a willful neglect of today's rebellious youth, but rather an antiquated selection policy. The librarian who acts negatively is going to lose on all points–the thinking public will be lost, the right wing (and in some cases the left wing) will find reasons to attack. In the final analysis the only answer to an attack for service is a given amount of certainty on the part of the librarian that he is doing the right thing. All of which, admittedly, lends an air of danger and, hopefully, a little badly needed excitement to librarianship.

Another formidable aspect of the dissident magazine, at least for the ordering librarian, is finding them. A common argument against not buying this or that magazine is a lack of information. The library has reasonable expectations that the average periodical or scholarly journal will arrive in time to neatly enter into the computer or on a three by five inch card. Not so with the littles (or with the average little): 1) they may publish irregularly–Robert Bly's *The Sixties,* is only three or four issues away after an initial promise some years ago of a quarterly; 2) they may fold without proper notice–*The Chicago Choice,* a marvel of the graphic arts and poetry combined, began four or five years ago, issued four numbers, collapsed, then according to current rumor is about to begin again; and finally, 3) they come in odd sizes, formats, and are likely to switch in midstream, or just for-the-hell-of-it publish a number which will not fit in the regular binding. But these inconveniences aside, how does one learn about who is publishing what?

There are two, possible three excellent, rather trustworthy guides. The first, and by far the best, is Len Fulton's twin billing: *Directory of Little Magazines and Small Presses* which is issued annually and sells for $2.50 (5218 Scottwood Road, Paradise, California, 95969). Fulton also publishes a quarterly *Small World Press,* which updates information in the *Directory,* has rather good reviews of the publications–including prose and poetry issued by the little presses who may or may not publish a magazine or newspaper–and has perceptive articles on trends. Lately he has begun issuing an annual of this same magazine with a complete listing of books published by the little presses, a nice complementary item to *Books in Print.* An older directory is *Trace* (Villiers Publications, P.O. Box 1068, Hollywood, California 90028) which combines a little magazine of questionable quality with a directory. It is neither as complete nor as up-to-date as Fulton's efforts. The third approach is the old warhorse *Ulrich's International Periodicals Directory* (New York, R.R. Bowker). With the twelfth edition (1968), it finally recognized (albeit circumspectfully) the little magazine by including the listing under "Literature, General." If one knows the name of the publication, *Ulrich's* can be used, but as there are no descriptive notes the unwary librarian may think he is ordering a little magazine only to end up with a scholarly journal on the influence of tool sheds on Joyce's *Finnegan's Wake.* Also, there is *Magazines for Librarians* (New York, R.R. Bowker, 1969) which has annotated sections on dissident magazines, little magazines, underground newspapers, and poetry magazines. The library which subscribed to only a few of these would end up with a fairly representative collection.

In terms of in-depth annotations, Robert Muller's *From Radical Left to Extreme Right* (Ann Arbor, Campus Publishers, 1967) is by far the best current source for material on over 150 dissident magazines. Fortunately, he plans to update the work, and a new edition is planned for next year. The basic retrospective list is Walter Goldwater's *Radical Periodicals in America 1890-1950* (New Haven, Yale. 1st rev. ed., 1966).

A few selected lists have also been published in the library literature, e.g., Sanford Berman's "Where It's At" (*Library Journal,* Dec. 15, 1968) which includes notes on major left wing and peace publications. A counter is Henry P. Durkin's "Where It's also At" (*Library Journal,* May 1, 1969) which lists major conservative and right wing journals. Daniel Tatko's "The Underground Press and New Left Press" (*Wilson Library Bulletin,* March, 1969) annotates the major underground newspapers. In my column in *Library Journal* I attempt to give at least some attention to rebel magazines.

Given this much assistance, it is difficult to rationalize for lack of information the sparcity of the dissident press in a library. And there are, to be sure, even other approaches. The best is to visit or to get in contact with a bookstore which stocks this kind of magazine. The Eight Street Bookstore in New York (the balcony section) has an excellent representative collection, as do many of the smaller stores in both the Village and the East Side. Jim Lowell of the Asphodel Bookstore in Cleveland, will gladly send volume 1, number 1 of new little magazines as they appear, and there is no charge for this service. The Underground Press Syndicate (UPS)—roughly equivalent to a magazine wholesaler and the A.P. and U.P. in one package—will send fifty underground newspapers to any library for a period of six months at a cost of $50. A sample packet of the dozen favorites may be obtained for a modest $4. And for nothing a library may obtain a list of UPS papers by writing Box 1613, Phoenix, Arizona 85001.

However, given a source is one thing, but finding materials in the magazines and papers is quite another. Admittedly, few of the titles mentioned here or in the guides are indexed. There are two indexes to little magazines. Over a number of years Alan Swallow issued *Index to Little Magazines,* which indexed thirty to fifty titles; however, the last edition of this came out nearly four years ago for the years 1964-1965. Relocated in Chicago, the firm plans to continue the work, but just when is a mystery. The second biennial volume of Stephen H. Goode's *Index to Commonwealth Little Magazines, 1966-67* was published by the Johnson Reprint Corporation in 1968, and covers forty-one titles. There is every indication the work will continue. Both in terms of time lapse—one to two or more years—and in terms of coverage, neither index is quite up to the more prosaic Wilson titles, and neither makes an effort to cover the left and right wing politically-oriented magazines.

There are now two efforts underway, or in the planning stage, to index politically radical magazines. The Radical Research Center is proposing a limited indexing of left of center periodicals while Sanford Berman, the well-known voice of the radical magazine supporters among librarians, is working out a complete, international index to both left and right wing

periodicals. It seems symptomatic of present attitudes that neither is able to gain a few thousand dollars in financial support, although millions are spent on scientific and less controversial abstracting services.

In the final analysis, a separate index covering dissident and little magazines should be published on a regular basis. It is too much to expect more than a few of the more reputable ones, such as *New Republic* and *National Review* or *Poetry* and the *Kenyon Review,* to take up valuable space in a standard H. W. Wilson Company item.

So far I have considered, in a purposefully exaggerated form, some of the fallacies of current selection policies. But this world, and particularly the world of the library, is ruled by the sacred dollar. What, then, of the so-called practical considerations of opening a collection to suit everyman's needs. The pragmatist, the hard-headed administrator, will tell you that it is one thing to devise a selection policy for all and quite another to implement it with funds. Most of the financial blessings showered upon our 22,000 or so libraries–exclusive of schools–go to the fifty largest libraries which account for 30 percent of all current expenditures. The remaining 70 percent of the library dollar is spread so thin that often it is only sufficient to keep up with current practices, certainly not with any sweeping innovations. What it comes to, at least for the time being, is that 50 to 200 of the largest public and academic libraries are going to have to take the lead. Hopefully, through cooperative efforts and federal or state funds, the smaller libraries may follow.

There is never enough money, but is this because the larger libraries are more involved with collecting than selecting? Perhaps if a little more thought was given to the usefulness of a title rather than to saturating the library with everything good, bad or indifferent in a subject area, there would be funds for less esoteric, more readable items. But separating the chaff from the seed is no easy matter, and here the average librarian will raise the specter of the information explosion. Rather than defuse it via selection, he shudders and recites figures. Even a glance at an average-sized newsstand indicates there are more magazines around than find their way into libraries. Some estimate 50,000, others 200,000, with most of the dead weight being carried by technology and science. The first reaction of a librarian is to swear off serials work for administration. The second, as typified by many papers at this conference, is to attempt to control the game by automation, union lists, systems or true grit. None seems to be quite the right answer.

The only irrefutable answer is suggested by Nelson Algren. Upon concluding a review of one of Simone de Beauvoir's more intimate autobiographies, he plaintively asked: "Won't she ever shut up?" If only a small number of the world's editors, writers and publishers would "shut up" life would be considerably easier for us all; they, however, will not, as any issue of *New Serial Titles* woefully proclaims. Some of the commercial official-organizational publications, which have yet to hear of birth control, continue to breed at an alarming rate. This year, for example, ALA gave birth to at least two new publications, and state organizations continued to do their bit. What is more, some editors now speak of proliferation via tape and microform which may relieve the shelves, but will put an ever-increasing heavy burden on the checkers.

Given this gloomy situation, confronted with a never-ending stream of magazines and a makeship dike of space, money, staff and time, the average librarian is forced into some type of decision. It is obvious he cannot have all the magazines neatly filed and organized, so he must pick and choose. Well, "must" is not quite right. Long ago he learned there are rules which allow him to throw up a passable dike (passable, at least, in terms of his conscience and public expectations). The times may be "a changing," but he is sitting tight. He prefers a given number of ploys to explain his position.

The first is favored by large libraries. The whole point of a periodical collection is to delimit, to concentrate on a given subject area or areas, to collect everything available. Once the limits of the area are established, acquisitions is the primary problem. Traditional selection is non-existent. The librarian need make few or no value judgements. The librarian must know the basic current and retrospective bibliographies, be familiar with the subject in depth, and, hopefully, be able to draw upon the wisdom and advice of professionals in the given field. His primary concern is to net everything, casting and recasting month in and month out. His is a bibliographical nightmare, not a selection problem.

It is also a major bookkeeping problem. Each decision regarding a magazine tends to have a cumulative financial effect. Not only will the subscription usually run on the familiar "until forbidden" basis, but the subscription will constitute a first demand on the total materials budget until a cancellation is entered–a forbidding move for even the most hearty librarian. (It is so forbidding, in fact, that the University of Southern California advised librarians in 1964/65 that "unless a subscription is to be maintained, it should not be initiated." This has implications quite beyond the present paper.) And even if the magazine is a gift or an exchange, there is the added cost of binding, processing, shelving, microfilming, recording, etc., etc. And while it is not unusual to discard a book, the weeding of magazines is unusual, expensive and generally not done. In the pre-World War II years some 20 percent of the average academic library budget went for periodicals. It is now in excess of 30 percent or higher. The increase is due to many factors, and not the least of them is the cumulative factor of mounting one subscription upon another until saturation is attained.

While other more persuasive arguments are put forth for justifying an endless collection of material, one suspects the bookkeeping and all it involves is a subjective, strong force for continuing the status quo. The chorus favoring comprehensiveness is so great, as Margit Kraft observes, "that one feels like a heretic even to question it."[20] Yet she goes on to present a rather favorable argument for more heretics. Quoting several sources she notes, among other statistics, that in 1960, 65 percent of some 11,000 magazine titles in the John Crerar Library were never used in a twelve-month period; and from a total of 37,000 serial titles at the National Library of Medicine, 88 percent were not subject to a single loan during a period of one year. And of the 4,347 loaned, the heaviest use was confined to 161 titles. She then asks the type of questions all librarians should be asking:

> If these libraries eliminated the periodicals for which there is no demand, would there be any loss to the advancement of knowledge? How long should unused periodicals be kept? ... Are we not the victims of a delusion by assuming that the sheer existence and collection of these periodicals for which there is no demand contribute in some way to scholarship?[20]

Were the answers irrefutable, the whole problem might be solved tomorrow by the librarian enforcing selection instead of collection. As it is, these are questions which cannot be answered emphatically "yes" or "no," for there are too many variables, too many unknown qualifiers. Still, if money is being used to build a dead collection, or, at best, a viable collection which is difficult to justify at the present use rate, one may reason that the demands of today's user cannot be denied because of our idea of the future. I would suggest that the large library which is not subscribing to magazines that students read either for enjoyment or for support of dissident views is banking too much on a future it may never see.

If selection is employed, money is then available. However, before pursuing what is to be done with this new-found wealth, let us for a moment examine the quantitative levels of magazine holdings among average-sized libraries. Quantitatively, a small library is fortunate to have 150 titles, but by adding 100 or so more, they are within the quantitative limits of the ALA Standards for most libraries–well within the limited adequacy of the collections of senior college and university libraries, where Clapp and Jordan set a modest 250 titles as a minimum requirement.[21] Add 250 or even a thousand more, and it would seem even larger libraries might function with relative efficiency for all but the dedicated scholar and the Ph.D. candidate. And add a larger library with unlimited titles, easily accessible via interlibrary loan, and the numbers game can be halted. In fact, this is precisely what is now being suggested (at least in part) via establishment of a centralized national lending library for serials.

Perhaps a second large national lending library might be considered, this one devoted not so much to back-up for the basic scholarly and scientific indexes and abstracting services, but to collect the thousands of little magazines, underground newspapers, dissident periodicals, and even short-lived expressions of opinions which may only make a broadside or one or two runs of a mimeographing machine. This will require a different type of library than the one so well known to the specialist.

If at least some of the students have been overlooked by the library, consider the forgotten American recently discovered, among other places, by Peter Schrag and Marshall Frady in the August 1969 issue of *Harper's*. He poses a similar, even more deadly threat to the public library, for as Schrag warns: "You'd better pay attention to the son of a bitch before he burns the country down," and the library along with it. In the word, special attention now must be paid to everyone–not simply to the researcher in the academic library or the middle-class white in the local neighborhood.

Another forgotten community member it seems to me, is the man or woman who may find little of value in *Playboy*, but supports such plays as

"Oh! Calcutta," or stands in line to see "I Am Curious (Yellow)." Aside from curiosity seekers, he or she represents the vanguard of the sexual revolution–a revolution which Gallup finds not likely to be blunted by the old morality. In a recent poll he delineated this potential library audience as the 66 percent of college students who think it is not wrong for men and women to have premarital sex relations, who by an almost equally large percentage find nothing wrong with pictures of nudes in magazines (even the *National Geographic*), and who, in the words of the 1957 Roth case, welcome "all ideas having even the slightest redeeming social importance–unorthodox ideas, controversial ideas, even ideas hateful to the prevailing climate of opinion."

Looking to the not too distant future we may approach the time when good, literate pornography will be a minor part of any library serving the needs of those who feel the need. If one accepts that sexual stimulation is not all that bad, one may go along with Kenneth Tynan. In his justification for pornography on the stage, he puts it this way: "Pornography is writing that seeks primarily, even exclusively, to bring about sexual stimulation. This can be done crudely or delicately. In the former case it would be bad literature; in the latter good."[22]

If the librarian should one day accept this notion, it might at least end the foolish gyrations of trying to justify everything from dear *Fanny Hill* to *Playboy* in terms of significant literature. It might, too, bring more than a few current nonreaders to the library. It might, in fact, open up a new window to the real, instead of the idealized world.

Throwing open a window in these troubled times requires confidence and not a little courage–it also assumes a detachment on the part of the librarian. For example, *American Opinion* supports right wing views which are quite beyond my notion of logic, taste or morality, the *Ladies' Home Journal* sends cold chills up my aesthetic back and the *Reader's Digest* seems as deplorable in its attitudes and objectives as the minds of the Americans who feed off it each week. Still, if one is to make a place in the library for everyman, and everyman's notion of what is good, bad or indifferent, it is necessary to assume the attitude of Nick von Hoffman, a reporter for the *Washington Post:* "The reporter can't walk into a situation in a towering rage. You don't have to agree with them, but when you disagree with them it's on the basis of what they say, not of the frightened things going on in the reporter's head. The reporter has to say: Am I going to react, or am I going to learn and observe and see."[23]

In terms of magazine selection there is no place for towering or even mild rage except against those who try to impose their "frightened things" on the library. The librarian must "learn and observe and see," not simply react.

In conclusion, all I ask is that librarians learn to do their thing reasonably well. If being a librarian in America is being a machine, I want nothing of it. If we are to be simply another pillar in the society we claim to mirror, I am checking out. And if one more student thinks that "if it isn't in the *Reader's Guide,* it may not have happened," I think we are lost. All I am suggesting is that there is a way out of what Jesse Kornbluth terms the

"winter in our heads," and, hopefully, librarians will be there first with the mind defroster. It might not just be intellectually challenging, it might just be fun.

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